

Vulcanite Bottle stoppers

I have found quite a few old bottle stoppers, and been given a fair few from other plot holders. They date from around 1900–1960 most have makers marks on them. Below are some of the bottle stoppers found.



In 1872, Henry Barrett invented this particular type of screw stopper – and they were subsequently used then for well over 100 years until the 1970s. Henry actually patented the design in the early 1880s, and he was also the person who designed the internal screw thread for the interior of the bottleneck. The stoppers themselves are made from hard, non-elastic, India rubber, also known as vulcanite. The process of “vulcanisation” involved heating rubber to 115 degrees Celsius with sulphur and also linseed oil – thereby converting it into a more durable material. The stoppers are also sometimes described as being made from ebonite, which in fact was the brand name for the vulcanised rubber – patented by Charles Goodyear in 1846. Wrapped around the stopper was a sealing washer of pink India rubber. These screw stoppers took the place of corks on most beer bottles, and the popularity of bottled beer increased.



Riley's Chisel top

In 1885 Mr. Riley brought out the "new improved" chisel shaped thumb screw stopper which was designed to be easier to grip with the fingers, or in a bottling machine. He also brought out, in the same year, the first machine for screwing and unscrewing the stopper whilst the bottle was being filled.

A couple of my favourite stoppers are The Royal Brewery, Brentford and W.B. Hieatt

The Royal Brewery, Brentford - The brewery stood at no. 21-27 Brentford High Street, where Waterman's Park is today. The brewery's origins go back to at least 1735 when a Francis Harvest was known to be brewing on the site. By the early years of the 20th century the Royal Brewery was reporting a continuous growth in profits. This was, according to the chairman, because the company 'sent out really good pure beer'. A description of the brewery, contained in a profile of Brentford firms in about 1905, describes it thus: 'the brewery together with its bottling stores has a prominent frontage to High Street, Brentford, extending down to the river, where there is a landing wharf available for loading and unloading goods and materials conveyed by water to and from the premises....' After the World War 1 ended the company reported a return to record profits although, due to restrictions placed on the company during the war, the brewery's estate was in need of maintenance as was the brewery. Ballard informed the City in 1919 that the company was faced with a 'big expenditure on this account'. The brewery was said to be cramped, and the plant was 'inadequate' for the company's 'present and future requirements'. In 1922 brewers Style & Winch of Maidstone purchased a large shareholding in the brewery. This brought with it 102 pubs and off-licences. Brewing on the site ceased almost immediately, and the beer was supplied by Style & Winch under a formal agreement. The brewery was closed on 2 June 1923 and all the plant and machinery sold. Around 1926, the buildings were demolished, and the site incorporated into the Brentford Gas Works, although the pubs still traded under the Royal Brewery name. Although no longer brewing, the company continued as a separate entity until 1953. *Info Brentford & Chiswick Local History Journal 14 (2005) Below The front and loading area of the Brewery in Brentford and bottle stopper dated 1914.*



W. B Hieatt -Walter Brydon Hieatt was born in 1843 in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. In 1881, he had two grocery stores, one at 14 Broadway, Ealing Broadway and the other at 2 Promenade, West Ealing. He sold Teas, Wines and spirits. The West Ealing branch was located opposite what is now Dean Gardens, but then Ealing Dean Common allotments. He was listed in the 1889 Kelly's directory as a Family Grocer, cheese-monger, wine, spirit and beer merchant. Walter Hieatt died on 29th June 1902, at Sunnyside, 23 Haven Green.

Image below: Hieatt's grocers shop was located at 2 Promenade, West Ealing now 176 Uxbridge

Road. In the image above photographed in 1881 Hieatt's shop is the last of the three shops after the chapel, on the corner with Kirchen Road.



Clay smoking pipes

Broken clay pipes can be easily seen in the mud on the allotments, mostly because they are white and stand out. I guess a lot have been found over the years by previous plot holders and now are lost, but I have been keeping anything I have found, and a few plot holders have given me ones they have found. My goal with all the artefacts I have found is that they will be kept for future plot holders to appreciate.

The majority of pipe bowls we found date from around 1900-1920, which is understandable due to the increase in population around 1900.

A plot holder "Fran" has found a pipe bowl near "Hill's cottage" by Mattock lane which has been date to around c.1780 other fragments of pipe also similar thick stems and small bowls so they could be from the early 1800s.

Below left "Fran's" pipe and below right other similar bowls fragments.



Below are more pipe bowls dating from around 1900. The king and Queen pipe bowl is Edward VII and Alexandra coronation in 1902





Below is an image of the pipe bowls found on the allotments with stems added, the image was used as a mug design and sold on the summer open day.

